

THE DEATH OF EVERYONE

PART ONE
OF THREE

THE BEST SUPERHERO COMIC BOOK IN THE UNIVERSE!

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SKYBOUND

98

INVINCIBLE



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JOHN RAUCH

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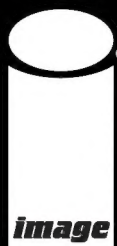


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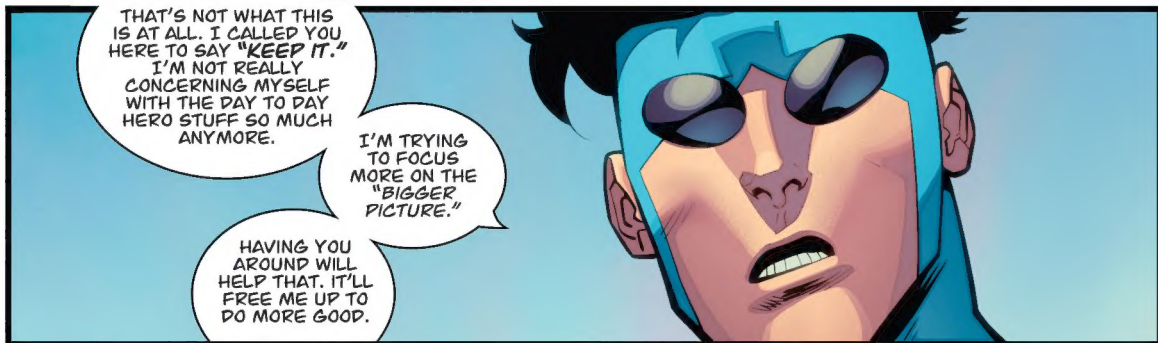
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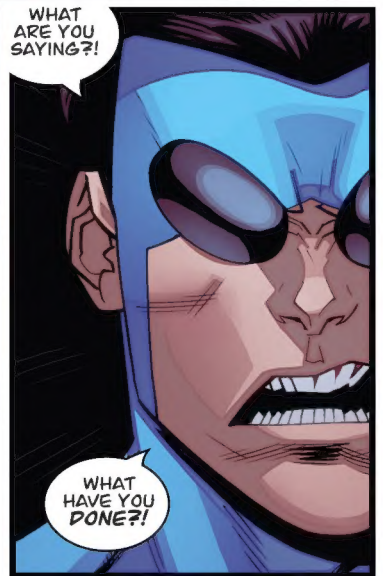
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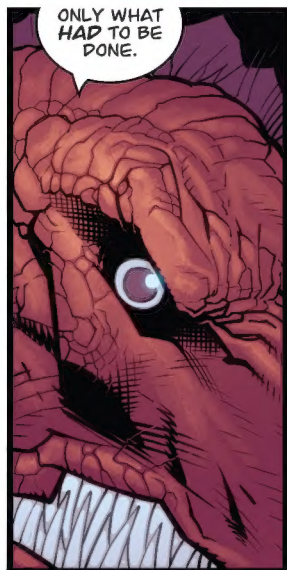
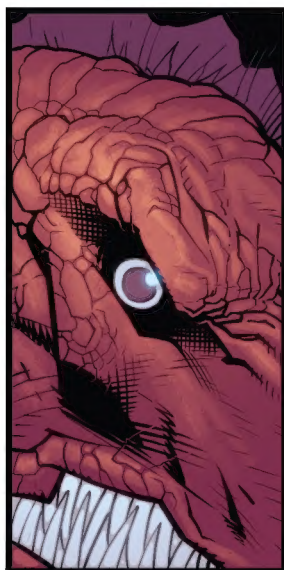
WE REACHED A TIPPING POINT... I DON'T KNOW HOW I DIDN'T SEE IT COMING **SOONER**. I'VE DONE THE MATH AND I'VE GOTTEN IT DOWN TO THE MINUTE... WE ARE A MATTER OF **WEEKS** AWAY FROM THE DISASTROUS CHANGES IN OUR CLIMATE NOT ONLY BEING IRREVERSIBLE... BUT **ACCELERATING**.

THE WORLD POPULATION WOULD BE CUT BY **EIGHTY PERCENT** OVER THE NEXT CENTURY DUE TO WORLDWIDE FAMINE AND DROUGHT... OUR SPECIES WOULD FACE **EXTINCTION**.

THERE WAS NO TIME, I COULDN'T WAIT TO SPEAK TO YOU, I HAD TO ACT.



WHAT DID YOU DO?!



ONLY WHAT HAD TO BE DONE.



PLEASE TELL ME YOU HAVEN'T PUT ANYONE IN DANGER.

PLEASE...



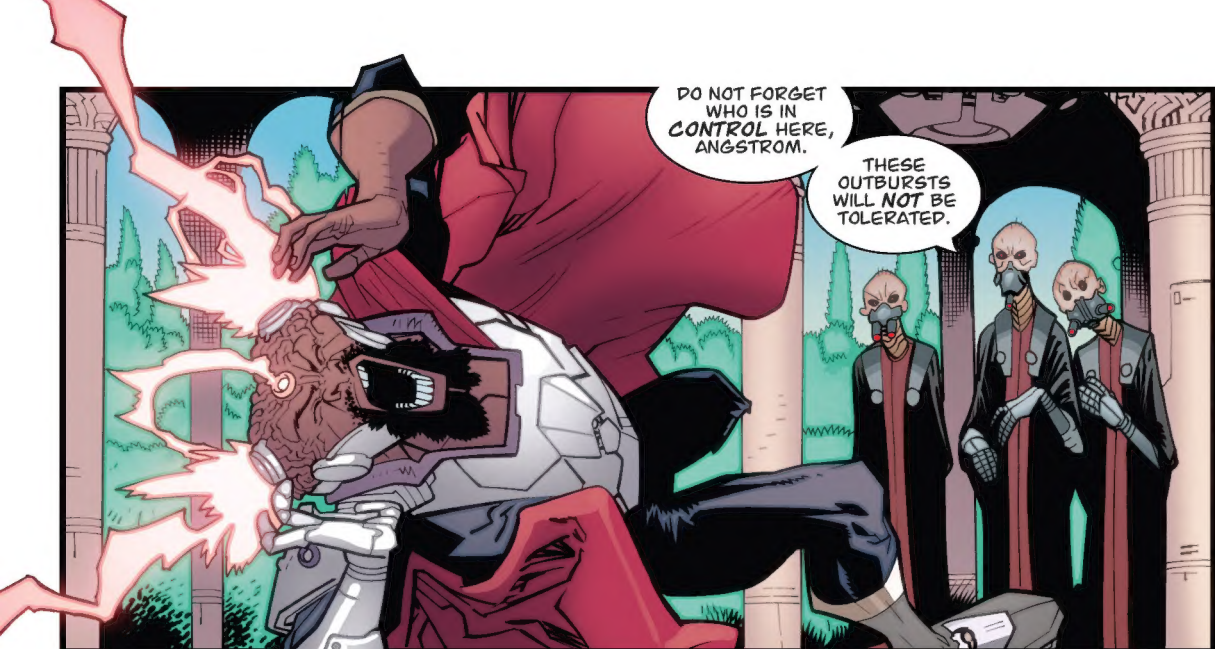
MILLIONS MUST DIE IN ORDER FOR BILLIONS TO SURVIVE.





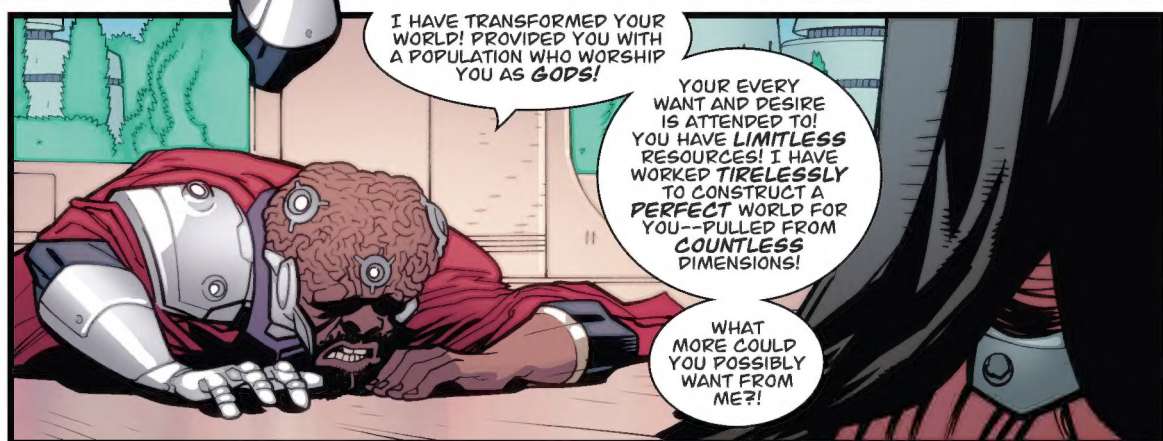
I MUST
HAVE MY
REVENGE!

I HAVE
WAITED
LONG
ENOUGH!



DO NOT FORGET
WHO IS IN
CONTROL HERE,
ANGSTROM.

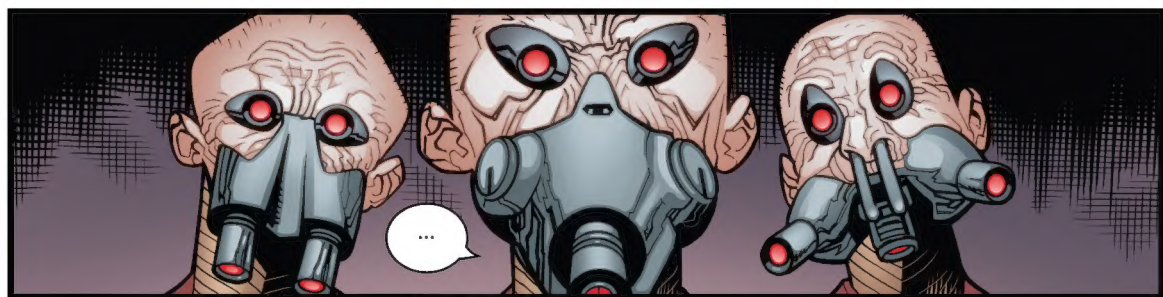
THESE
OUTBURSTS
WILL NOT BE
TOLERATED.



I HAVE TRANSFORMED YOUR
WORLD! PROVIDED YOU WITH
A POPULATION WHO WORSHIP
YOU AS **GODS!**

YOUR EVERY
WANT AND DESIRE
IS ATTENDED TO!
YOU HAVE **LIMITLESS**
RESOURCES! I HAVE
WORKED **TIRELESSLY**
TO CONSTRUCT A
PERFECT WORLD FOR
YOU--PULLED FROM
COUNTLESS
DIMENSIONS!

WHAT
MORE COULD
YOU POSSIBLY
WANT FROM
ME?!



...



NOTHING.

YOU ARE
FREE TO GO.
THE **TECHNICIANS**
HAVE NO FURTHER
USE FOR YOU.



MARK?! WHAT WAS THAT?
I HEARD LOS ANGELES--
WE'RE MONITORING THE
CITY AND WE DON'T SEE
ANYTHING. I CAN'T
UNDERSTAND
YOU!

AND HOW
DID YOU
GET THIS
NUMBER!



SORRY, I
WAS FLYING
REALLY
FAST.

AND ROBOT
PUT YOUR
NUMBER IN THIS
PHONE WHEN
HE MADE IT
FOR ME.



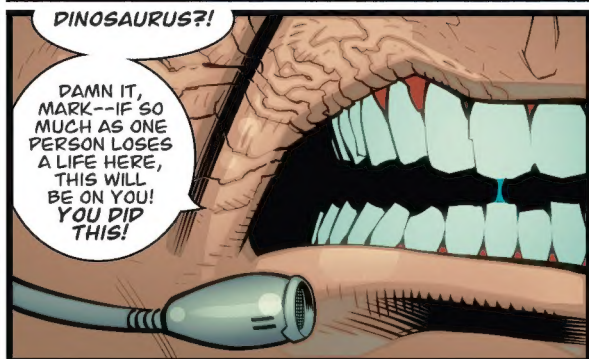
LOS ANGELES
HAS NO CURRENT
UNUSUAL
ACTIVITY. IT'S
QUIET.

WHAT'S
REALLY
GOING ON
HERE,
MARK?



IT'S LAS VEGAS ALL
OVER AGAIN! WE HAVE
TO FIND THE BOMBS
BEFORE DINOSAURUS
SETS THEM OFF--
WE DON'T HAVE
ANY TIME!

I NEED
YOU TO GET
EVERYONE
OUT HERE!
NOW!



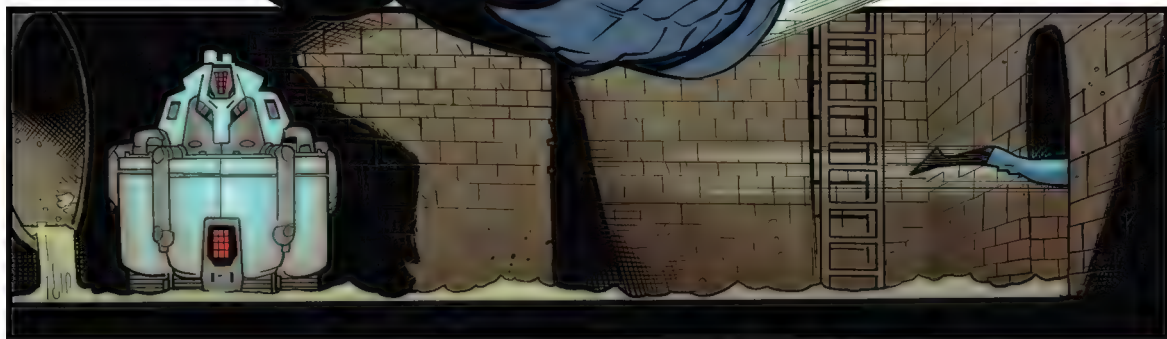
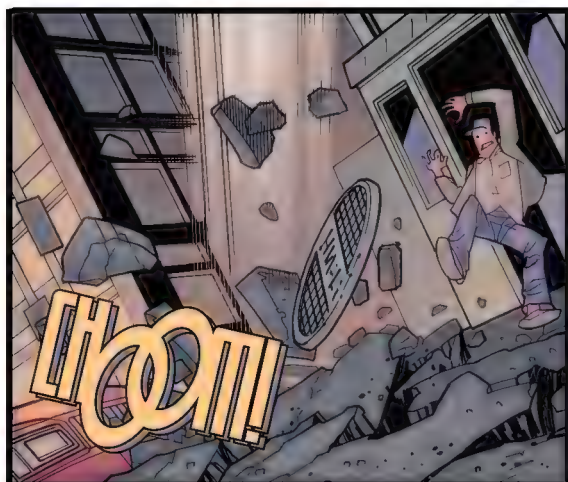
DINOSAURUS?!

DAMN IT,
MARK--IF SO
MUCH AS ONE
PERSON LOSES
A LIFE HERE,
THIS WILL
BE ON YOU!
YOU DID
THIS!



YOU CAN
SCOLD ME
LATER--THROW
ME IN PRISON--
BUT FOR
NOW--

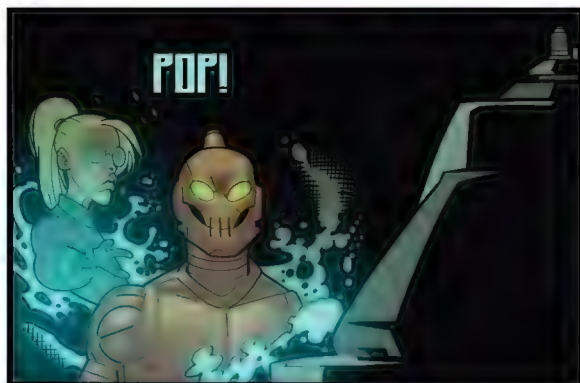
JUST
HELP ME
MAKE IT
RIGHT!





ANY KIND OF ETA FOR THE GUARDIANS?! THESE COULD ALL GO OFF AT ANY SECOND!

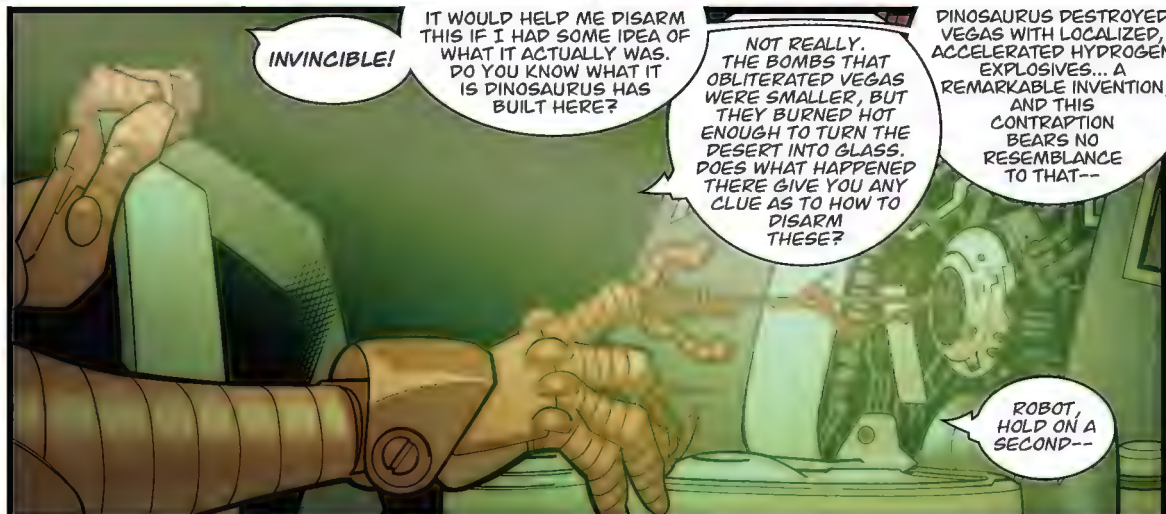
THEY'RE ARRIVING ON SITE RIGHT NOW. WE'RE SPACING THEM OUT INTO SEARCH GROUPS SO THEY CAN COVER MORE GROUND QUICKLY.



POP!



THANKS, MS. POPPER.



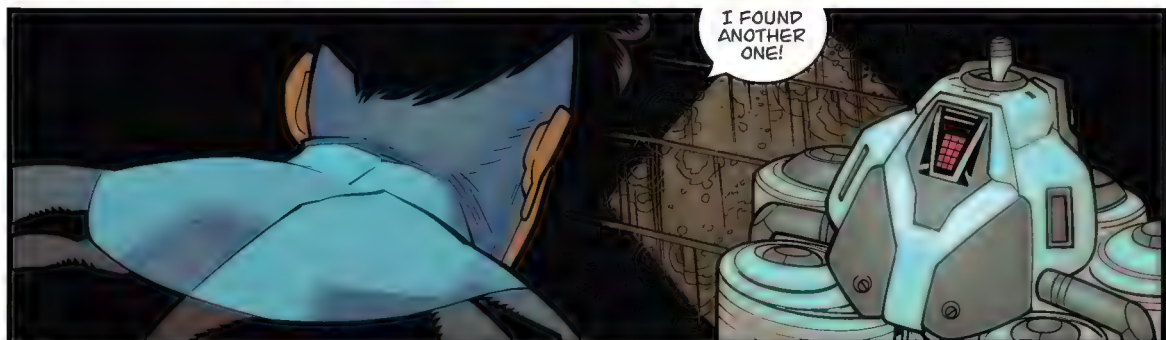
INVINCIBLE!

IT WOULD HELP ME DISARM THIS IF I HAD SOME IDEA OF WHAT IT ACTUALLY WAS. DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT IS DINOSAURUS HAS BUILT HERE?

NOT REALLY. THE BOMBS THAT OBLITERATED VEGAS WERE SMALLER, BUT THEY BURNED HOT ENOUGH TO TURN THE DESERT INTO GLASS. DOES WHAT HAPPENED THERE GIVE YOU ANY CLUE AS TO HOW TO DISARM THESE?

DINOSAURUS DESTROYED VEGAS WITH LOCALIZED, ACCELERATED HYDROGEN EXPLOSIVES... A REMARKABLE INVENTION, AND THIS CONTRAPTION BEARS NO RESEMBLANCE TO THAT--

ROBOT, HOLD ON A SECOND--



I FOUND ANOTHER ONE!



OKAY, INVINCIBLE'S FOUND ANOTHER BOMB.

ROBOT'S BUSY, WE NEED TO TELEPORT SOME TECH HEAD OVER THERE TO SHUT IT DOWN. IS THAT WEIRDO D.A. SINCLAIR REACHABLE?

OUTRUN, COME IN! I FIGURED YOU'D HAVE FOUND ABOUT SIX OF THESE SO FAR.

ONLY THREE, SIR. I'VE MARKED THEM ON THE GPS. STILL LOOKING.

ROBOT, WE'VE GOT FOUR OTHER DEVICES LOCATED. YOU'RE SURE THESE AREN'T BOMBS?

WE CAN'T JUST PLACE A SCIENTIST ON EACH ONE OF THESE THINGS AND HOPE FOR THE BEST. WHAT'S THE PLAN HERE? ANY IDEAS?

IF I HAD A DEFINITIVE PLAN WE COULD TELEPORT ALL MY OTHER ACTIVE DRONES HERE, AND I COULD DISARM THEM ALL REMOTELY. SADLY, I DON'T YET KNOW HOW THAT CAN BE DONE--HAVING ANOTHER PAIR OF EYES ON THESE WOULD HELP.

CECIL? GET SINCLAIR AND WHATEVER OTHER EGGHEADS YOU'VE GOT DOWN HERE TO HELP ROBOT.

ROBOT, ANY CLUES AS TO WHAT WE'RE DEALING WITH HERE? ANY INDICATION ON WHAT EXACTLY WILL HAPPEN IF THESE THINGS GO OFF ANYTIME SOON?

AGAIN, I SEE NO SIGNS THAT THIS DEVICE IS EVEN CAPABLE OF DETONATING. I'M ALMOST CERTAIN THEY ARE NOT EXPLOSIVE IN NATURE.

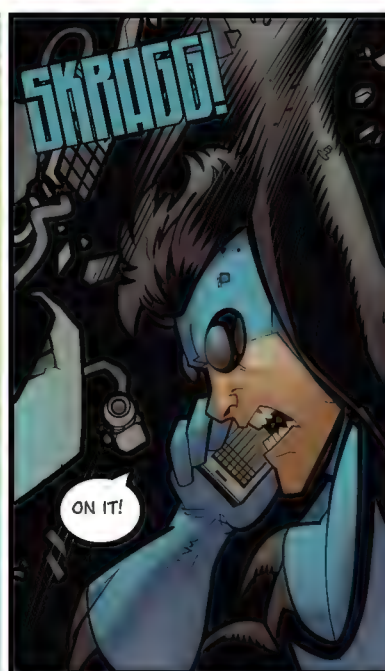
WAIT A MINUTE, THERE IS AN ENERGY SOURCE, BUT IT'S NOT BUILDING UP ANYTHING FOR AN EXPLOSION. IT'S EMITTING A PULSE DOWN DEEPER BELOW THE SURFACE. I'LL NEED TO DO SOME READINGS, BUT IF THE BEAM IS POWERFUL ENOUGH AND THE FREQUENCY IS TUNED THE RIGHT WAY, IT COULD BE APPLYING ARTIFICIAL STRESS ON THE TECTONIC PLATES BELOW IN ORDER TO INDUCE A--

OH NO--





OKAY--TIME'S UP! NO MORE ANALYZING! WE NEED TO SMASH THESE MACHINES-- SHUT THE SIGNAL OFF BEFORE THEY COLLAPSE THE WHOLE CITY!

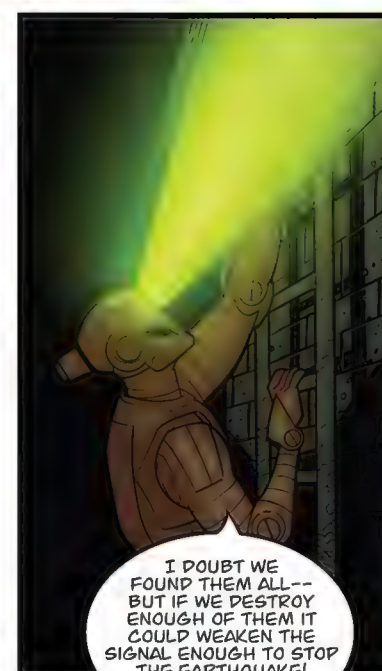


SKRGGG!

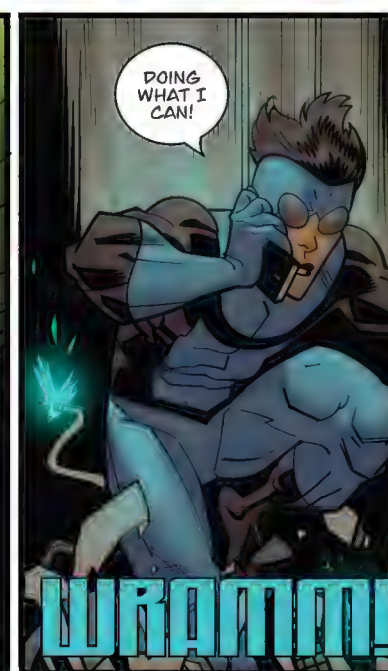
ON IT!



KROOM!



I DOUBT WE FOUND THEM ALL-- BUT IF WE DESTROY ENOUGH OF THEM IT COULD WEAKEN THE SIGNAL ENOUGH TO STOP THE EARTHQUAKE!



DOING WHAT I CAN!

WRAMMM!

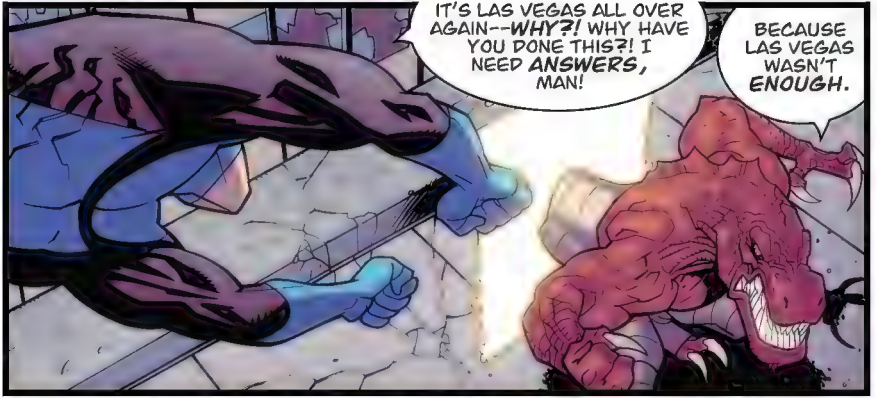


AND I'VE GOTTEN THREE MORE!

GREAT JOB, OUTRUN! THAT DID IT--I THINK IT'S STOPPING!



WHAT THE---?!



IT'S LAS VEGAS ALL OVER AGAIN--WHY?! WHY HAVE YOU DONE THIS?! I NEED ANSWERS, MAN!

BECAUSE LAS VEGAS WASN'T ENOUGH.



STOP... JUST STOP THIS. YOU'RE WASTING YOUR ABILITIES. SAVING THESE PEOPLE, IT'S BENEATH YOU.

YOU'RE SMART ENOUGH TO SEE THAT. WHY SAVE ONE WHEN YOU CAN SAVE BILLIONS? HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I SAID THIS TO YOU?

AND YET, HERE YOU ARE-- STILL FLYING AROUND, TRYING TO STOP THE DEATH OF SO FEW, WHILE THE LIVES OF SO MANY... HANG IN THE BALANCE.

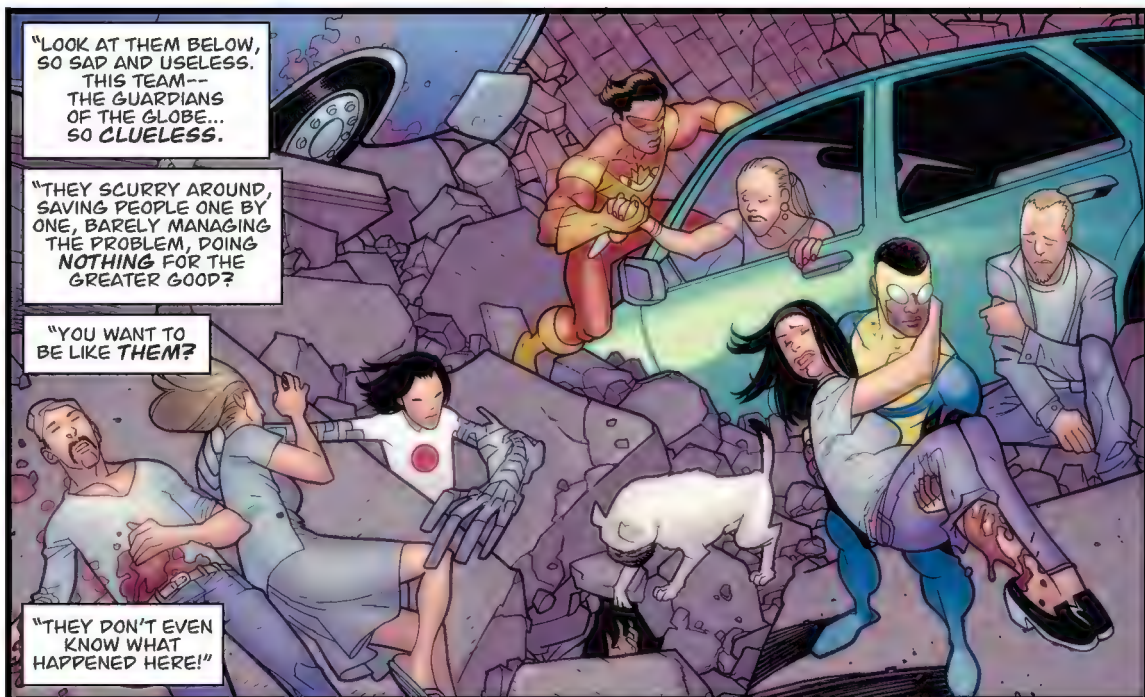
IT'S PATHETIC!



YOU'RE INSANE!



AND I KNOW YOU DON'T REALLY BELIEVE THAT.



"LOOK AT THEM BELOW,
SO SAD AND USELESS.
THIS TEAM--
THE GUARDIANS
OF THE GLOBE...
SO CLUELESS.

"THEY SCURRY AROUND,
SAVING PEOPLE ONE BY
ONE, BARELY MANAGING
THE PROBLEM, DOING
NOTHING FOR THE
GREATER GOOD?"

"YOU WANT TO
BE LIKE THEM?"

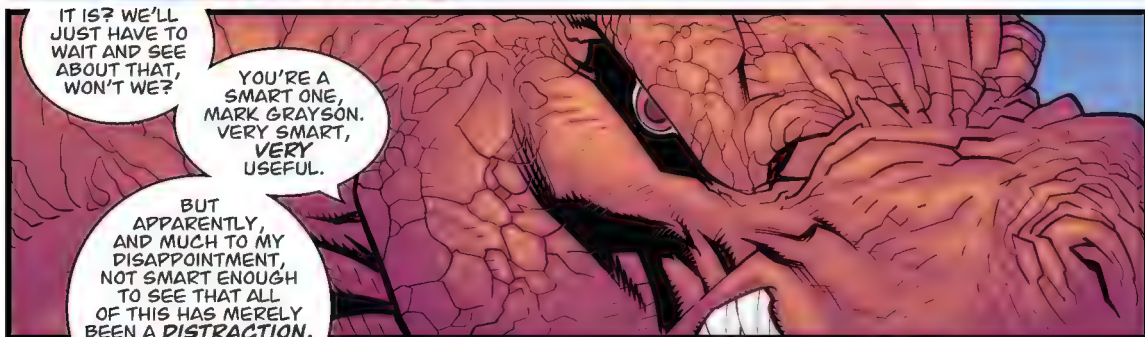
"THEY DON'T EVEN
KNOW WHAT
HAPPENED HERE!"



THEY KNOW EXACTLY
WHAT HAPPENED
HERE--A LUNATIC
KILLED THOUSANDS
OF PEOPLE... ALL
BECAUSE OF
ME!

I TRUSTED
YOU! I
THOUGHT YOU
WANTED TO HELP
PEOPLE!

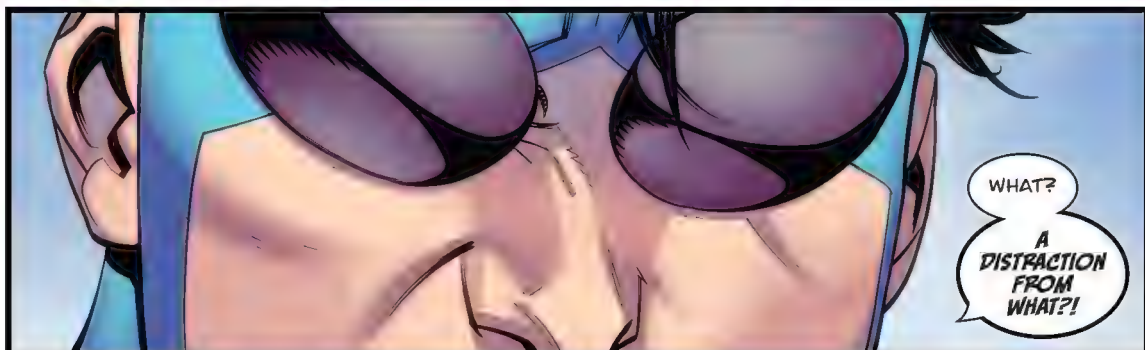
ANY THOUGHT
OF YOU AND I
WORKING TOGETHER
TO SAVE THE WORLD--
THAT'S OVER--
THAT'S DONE!



IT IS? WE'LL
JUST HAVE TO
WAIT AND SEE
ABOUT THAT,
WON'T WE?

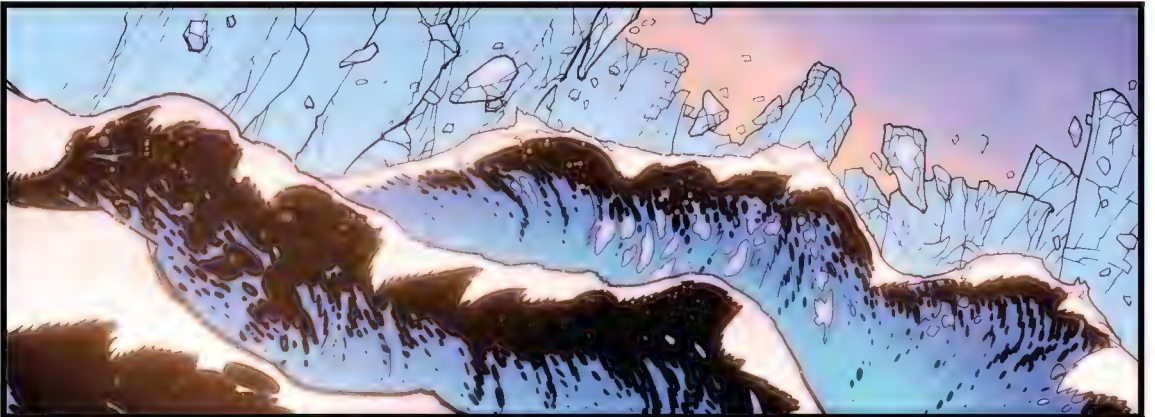
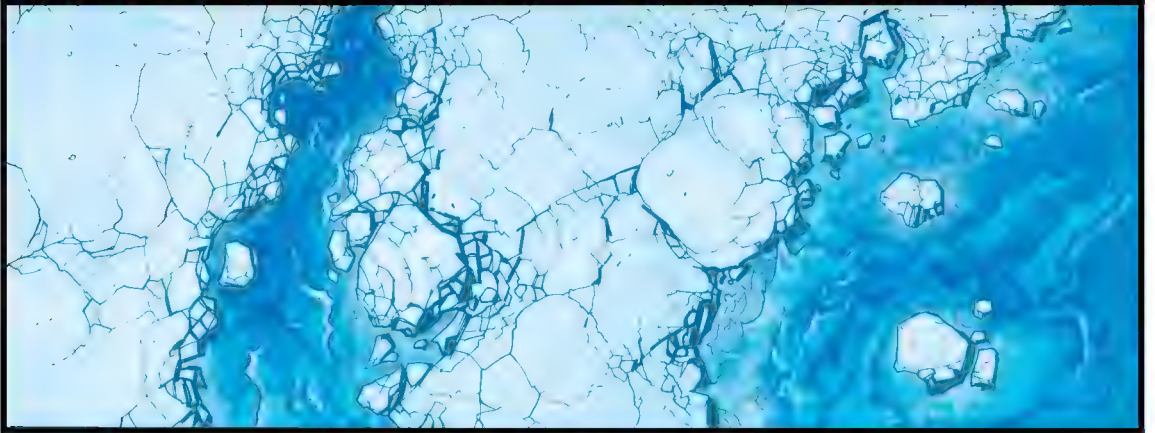
YOU'RE A
SMART ONE,
MARK GRAYSON.
VERY SMART,
VERY
USEFUL.

BUT
APPARENTLY,
AND MUCH TO MY
DISAPPOINTMENT,
NOT SMART ENOUGH
TO SEE THAT ALL
OF THIS HAS MERELY
BEEN A DISTRACTION.



WHAT?

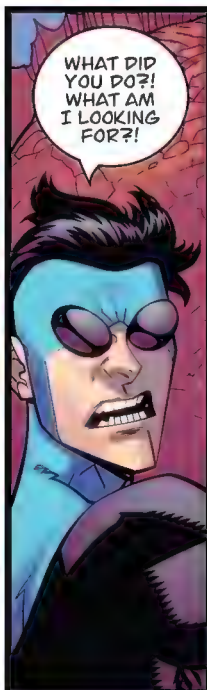
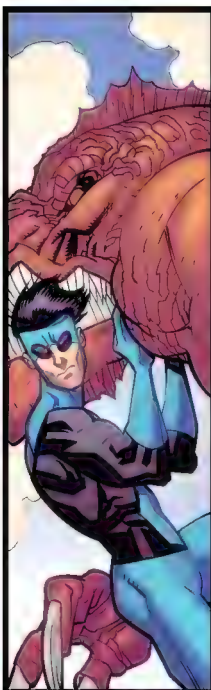
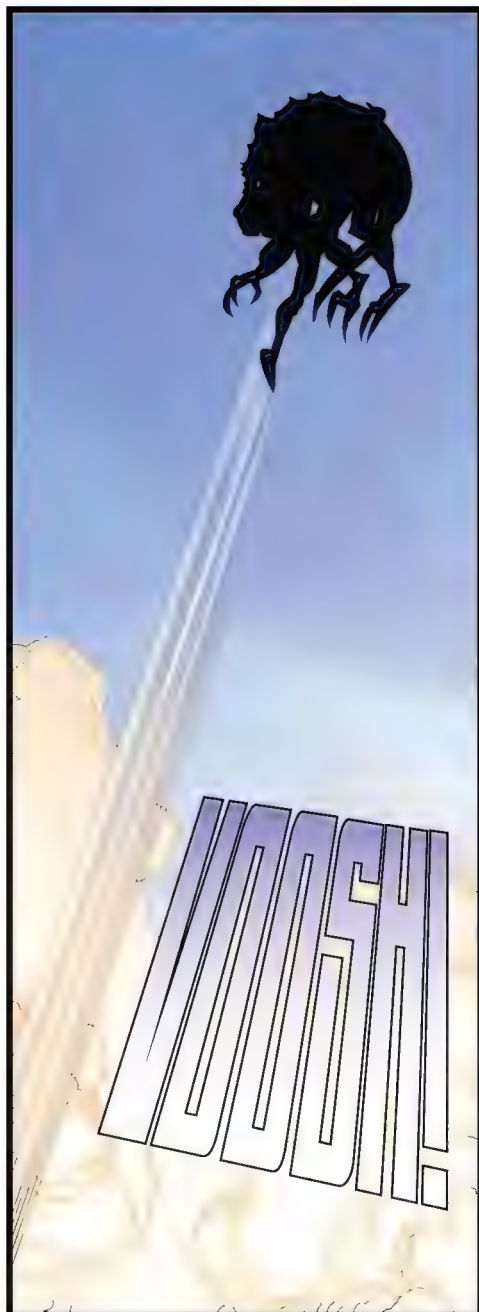
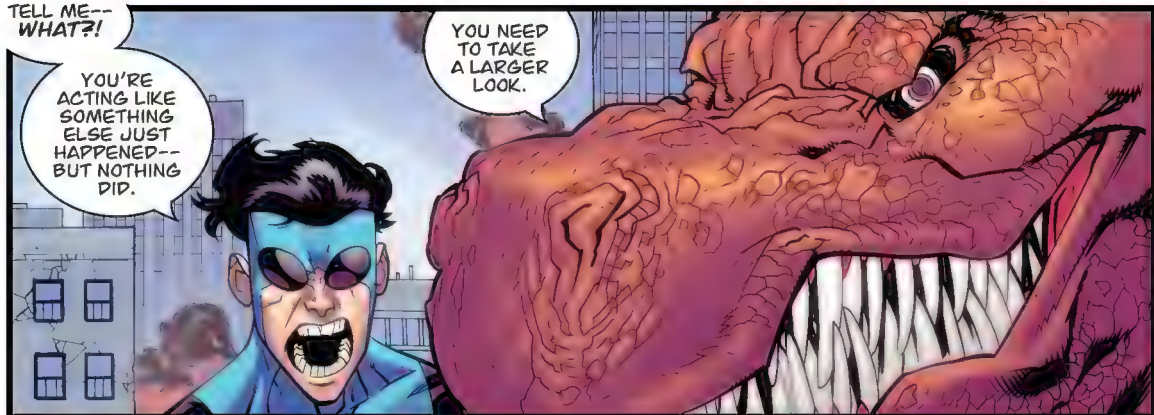
A
DISTRACTION
FROM
WHAT?!

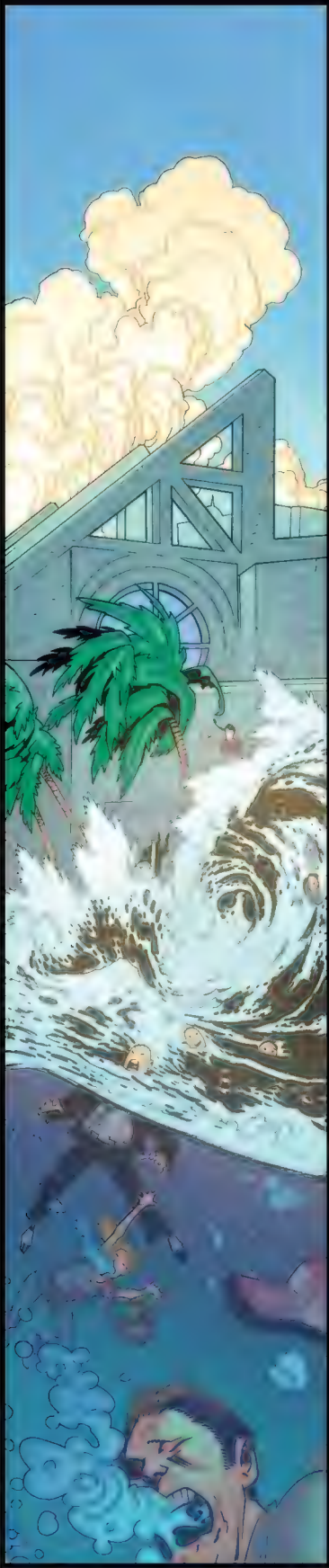


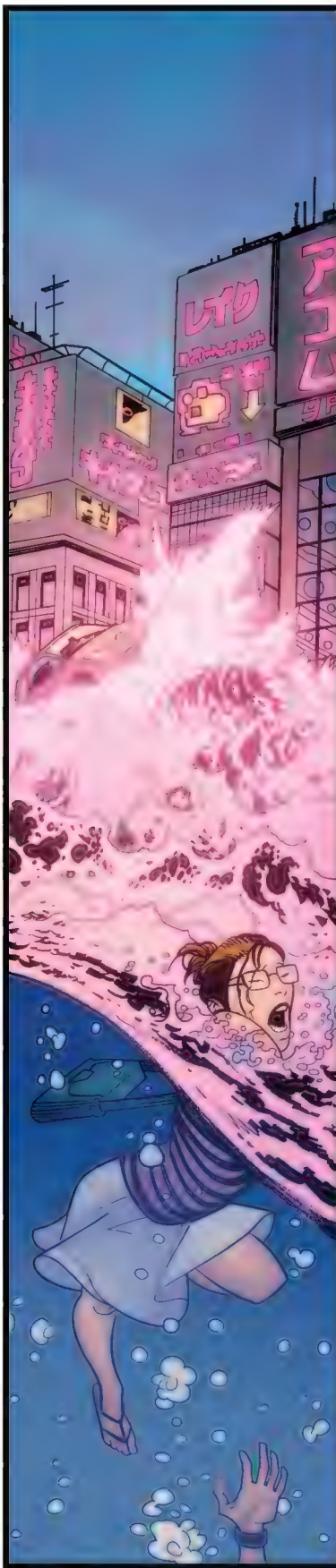
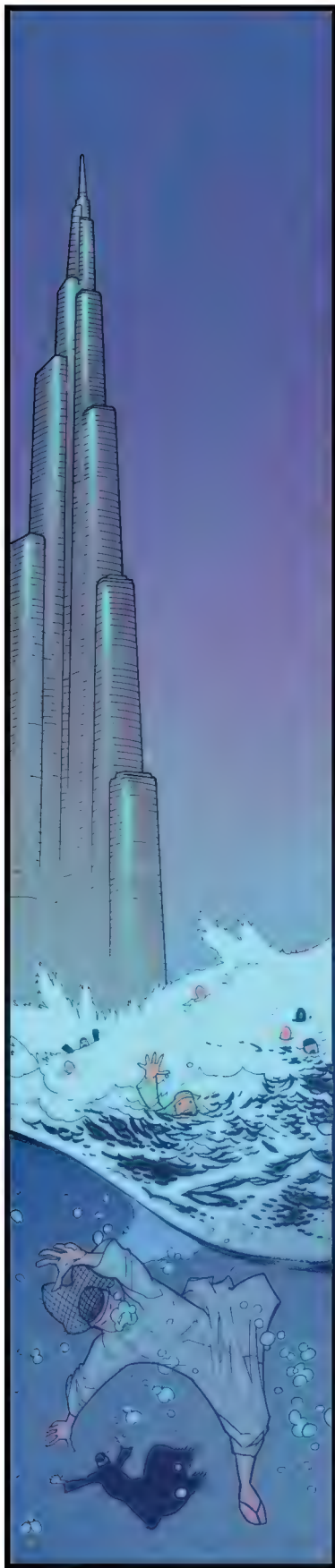
TELL ME--
WHAT?!

YOU'RE
ACTING LIKE
SOMETHING
ELSE JUST
HAPPENED--
BUT NOTHING
DID.

YOU NEED
TO TAKE
A LARGER
LOOK.









YOU'RE
KILLING
EVERYONE.

WRITE US @

INVINCIBLE@SKYBOUND.COM

INVINCIBLE

I'm with Dinosaurus on this one. We're all going out in a Soundgarden-scored disaster. Dark days are ahead. Glad we're riding this out together.

Oh, you New Yorkers... sheesh, like it's the end of the world or something! Don't be so dire. Invincible will save the day... or will he? Man, these issues are going to be intense!

Letters?!

Dear Robert, Ryan, Cory, Cliff, John, and Sean,

I just gotta say that issue 96 was one of the finest comics I've had the pleasure of reading. It was firing on all cylinders this month. You really should have stamped "This one has it all" on the cover. You managed to touch on all your plot lines. I was laughing out loud at the interactions between Mark and Eve. Then the reveal that General Gregg has already impregnated 12 Earth women, and loves them all, hilarious. Mark and the gang are so screwed. No other comic delivers on this level. Genre defying really.

Cory, your pencils look amazing. The design of Monster Girl and Robot's costumes is so cool. They both look beautifully otherworldly. The entire Flaxan planet has been a treat. I'm always a little worried when Ryan takes a break but having both your styles in the book compliment each other perfectly. I hope to see your name on the cover again soon.

Robert, I wanted to ask you about your writing process quickly. I've read a lot about the Levitz paradigm recently and saw the pictures of Jonathan Hickman's charts and graphs to juggle plot points in FF. I was just wondering if you did the same thing to track plot points in Invincible. Issue 96 especially seemed to demonstrate this style of writing. As a main plot point ends, subplots move up to take their place. The Flaxan invasion ends, and both the Vitrumite plot line and the Dinosaurus plots are moved forward along with Mark/Eve relationship and Robot/Monster Girl. You have at least six plots going at once. How do you keep them all straight? How do you decide which plots to let simmer and which plots to push forward? Whatever you're doing, it's working.

No, it's not. For the most part, aside from random notes on my phone and on my handwritten issue-to-issue plots, I keep all this in my head... which is one of the reasons you're seeing Angstrom Levy in this issue, issue 98, for the first time since ISSUE 64! (I think it was 64...) ANYWAY, it's really not all that complicated. I list the plot threads to keep track of them, but all the ins and outs of where I plan to go... I just let that rattle around and take shape in my head over the months (or years) of work time before I get around to plugging it into a script.

Thanks again for all your hard work, guys, your book sets the bar for superhero comics. With so many comics relying on retcons, renumberings and rehashes, INVINCIBLE is one of the only ones I still look forward to. Four issues in three months is the best Christmas present I could have asked for.

And Ryan, mail some art to Splash Page before you decide you hate it and burn it all. I'll buy some.

Jason Wanvig

HA! Ryan, you'll never live that down! You crazy man! YOU SHOULD HAVE SENT THOSE PAGES TO ME!

Hello Kirkman and gang,

Wanted to thank y'all for consistently putting out my favorite comic book of all time. Granted, this whole dilemma Mark has been enduring the last few issues has been gut wrenching, I still am anxiously awaiting each episode with a smile on my face.

I was thankful to have been an attendee at Morrisoncon this past month for my 10th anniversary (I've got a cool wife). Enjoyed listening to Kirkman at his panels and more importantly speaking to him regarding an Invincible script I wrote. Sadly, legal issues prevented him from being able to read my great motion picture adaptation of this comic I love, but, I wanted to offer my services as the next writer of Invincible. It's been hinted at both here and at Morrisoncon that Kirkman would, at some point, leave the book. Keep me in mind. Keep up the great work. Love you guys.

Sincerely,
Rob Hagemeister

I've heard Robert saying the same thing—and maybe if Disney offers him a buyout that will happen sooner than later—but my question to you (and everyone lining up behind you...), why don't you create your own Invincible? If you have the drive to write a screenplay, get out there right now and make more better comics. Don't wait for this guy to fill his Uncle Scrooge vault!

(I'm sure we're not done dispensing career advice yet...)

My Uncle Scrooge vault? Nice... In all honesty, the guy who would ideally take over for me on INVINCIBLE is probably about eight years old right now, or better yet, not even born yet (Unless Brian K. Vaughan wants the gig! I'd give up now just so I could read his issues!). I have no intention of leaving this book any time soon. I'd love it if Ryan and I were still bickering and working together in thirty years.

As long as I still have enough time for a swim in me wee money bin!

Robert mother loving Kirkman!

When will we see Battle Beast again?

Thanks,
Leo Nieves

Oh shit...

NOT SOON... but eventually.

I love Battle Beast, so I'm writing in, as requested in issue #96 -- which was excellent, by the way. For Christmas, I'd really like to see Battle Beast, Monster Girl and Dinosaurus form a team.

That is all.

Kelvin

OH SHIT...

That'd be a pretty awesome spin-off.

Invinciteam,

BATTLE BEAST! He would put the hurt on Dinosaurus or anyone else for that matter! (Thragg doesn't count *coughcough*). Any time you throw me some BATTLE BEAST I'm a happy man. Say his name in a victorious manner, it sounds good coming out of anyone's mouth. Kirkman, you don't give my boy enough love and I tell people that, now I'm just backing Sean up. Greatest character in the book. That's right, even Ottley secretly knew that when "the death of everyone" poster popped into his head that BATTLE BEAST was there! Let him show up at #100 it's a wrap for everyone, that fool is a problem! Even Michonne can get it! BATTLE BEEEST!!!

P.S. on second thought, Thragg can catch it too..

P. Rowan
Boston

BATTLE! BEAST! The movement has begun! Let's just say, steps have been taken that this story is more possible than it was last month—for the Beast and your other Invincible Universe favorites. So if there's a greater groundswell for the Actioneers or that space guy with hands for feet—and all that would take is FOUR people—speak up.

Wait, which one is Battle Beast again?

Sir Kirkman,

What advice would you give to an aspiring comic book writer/artist who is getting sick of attending art school? Sure, plenty of the classes I loathe will make me a more rounded artist if I end up deciding on a different profession, but that's too damn logical. Can you think of a compelling reason not to drop out of art school to start working on comics now?

(See, MORE career advice...)

Why not just do both? Hedge your bets, although, I don't know of anyone who has succeeded because of art school, I think you could just as easily just practice for four years. If you HAVE the talent, you'll get better. And if you have NO talent, no amount of art school will help you... so you're screwed anyway. It will teach you discipline, which I must say, is something every professional artist needs. So... where was I? Drop out!

No, don't... just ride it out, hone your craft and write on the side, cry baby!

Have you ever seen the show Parks and Rec? Cause the I'm pretty sure their Ron Swanson is a Viltrumite.

Also, something that's been bugging me the past 2 months, when does the GUARDING THE GLOBE timeline take place relative to the INVINCIBLE timeline? Were the Guardians saving the Bengali folks from a mudslide before or after the most recent Flaxian invasion?

After. Robot and Monster Girl popped back in at the end of the first GLOBE miniseries. Also, you're about to start dropping THE WALKING DEAD spoilers, so I had to censor your ass.

Before you get to that, Guarding The Globe (the regular series) takes place after the Flaxian Invasion.

Even though SPOILER was one of my favorite characters in TWD, and I was deeply saddened with SPOILER, I'm glad you SPOILER. Especially in the brutal way you did. If SPOILER hadn't been the groovy character SPOILER was, and if you hadn't

been the diabolical sadist you are, I wouldn't have felt anything from that scene. So I'm looking forward to the 100th issue of INVINCIBLE, and whatever treachery you have in store for us readers.

But seriously, everyone knows Glenn died, right?

Wow, dude... that's so funny I'm leaving it in. Sorry, everyone. Holy CRAP!

And though you've proven you don't need to kill off characters to make a compelling story, I hope you don't pull any shenanigans like you did with Conquest impaling Eve. When characters die, or appear to die, or get ever so close to dying, and then recover like nothing happened, it takes all the value out of their lives.

I've learned my lesson on that. No more characters dying and then not actually dying... no sir.

Keep up the stellar work you crazy kids! Especially Ryan and Cliff. You fellas draw the best violence.

Jeff

They really do.

Kirkman,

Nothing to see here. I still don't really Get the character of Invincible—now known as lowly Mark Grayson! I feel like I know Nightwing, Dick Grayson, a lot better. I don't know why That is, I mean they're pretty much the same character, right? As for "Everyone Dies," without so much as a question mark: What's that about? No wait, don't tell me! You're doing "Invincible In Hell", right? Cause that would not be very original—duh; everyone from Wolverine to Namor to Hellboy has done that. If I sound frustrated, I am. This issue, 96 I think--although who can keep track of this mess?--was okay...maybe even good. But what the heck is this obsession you have with the whole Monster Girl and Robot in the Flaxan dimension thing??? They were there for a long time...okay, we get it. This, and the cliffhanger from this issue...I for one didn't even understand. Not at all! So any time you want to make this into a real series like GUARDING THE GLOBE is, ah...let me know, okay? THE WALKING DEAD > INVINCIBLE, too. Hey, how come nobody writes letters to "PenVinciPals"? Isn't that what this l-c is called? L-c = letter-column.

Sincerely,

Andrew J. Shaw

PS: The confrontational me is back, baby!

Did you bang Atom Eve, too?

You don't feel like you know Mark because you have the memory of a goldfish, and Mark hasn't been prominently featured in recent issues. BOOM!

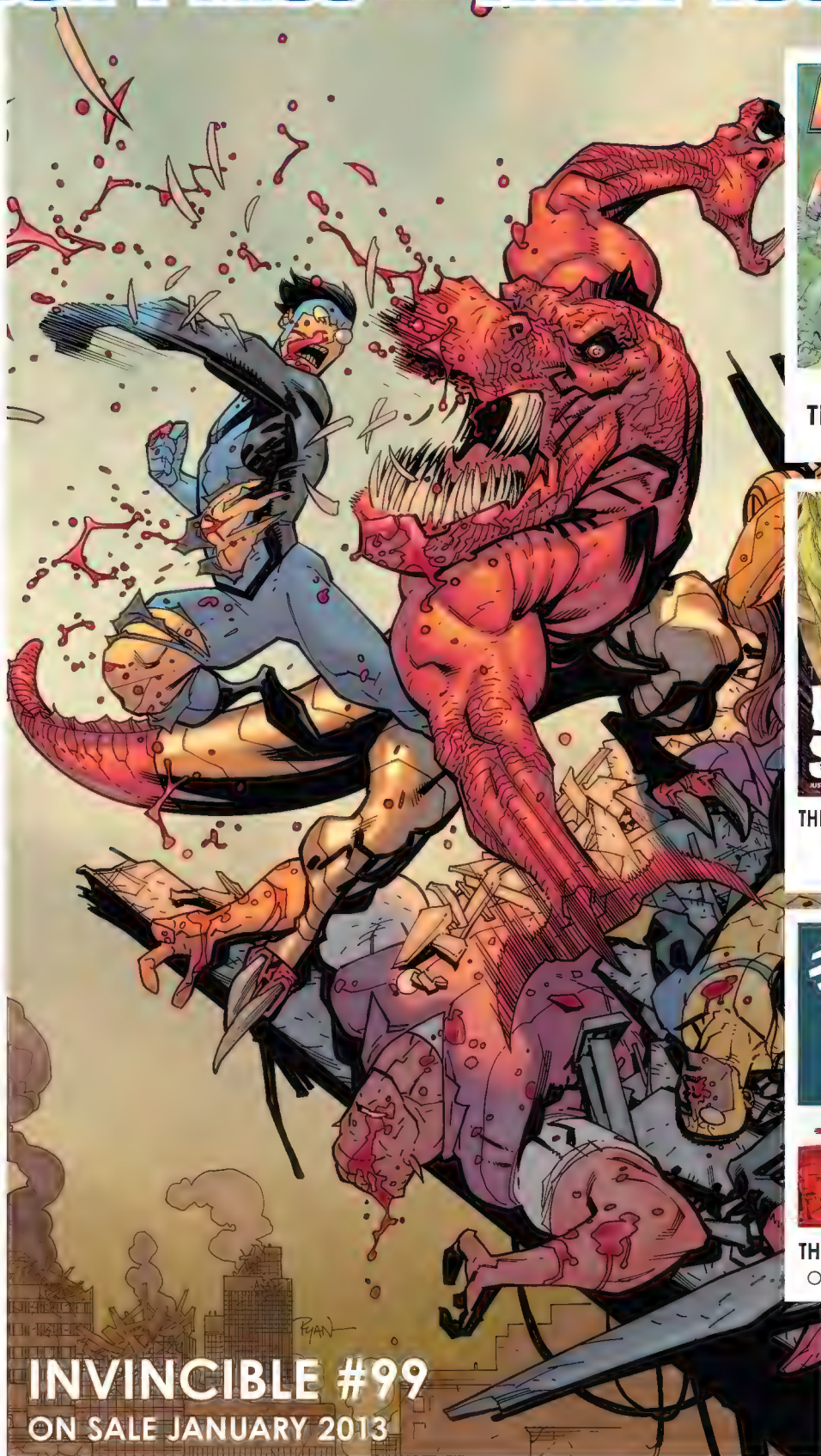
Three more weeks, one more issue: INVINCIBLE #99: THE DEATH OF EVERYONE PART TWO! In which Ryan ABSOLUTELY TEARS SHIT UP.

-Sean Mackiewicz

Man oh, man! Issue 99 is gonna blow doors off! Look out world, here comes awesome! See you then!

-Robert Kirkman

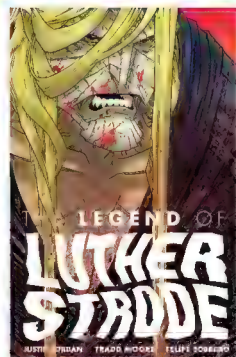
DON'T MISS THE NEXT ISSUE!



INVINCIBLE #99
ON SALE JANUARY 2013



**GUARDING
THE GLOBE #4**
ON SALE NOW



**THE LEGEND OF LUTHER
STRODE #1 (of 6)**
ON SALE NOW



THIEF OF THIEVES #11
ON SALE NEXT WEEK

20
1992-2012
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☐ The Activity #10



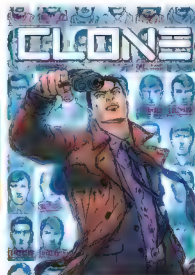
☐ Age of Bronze #32



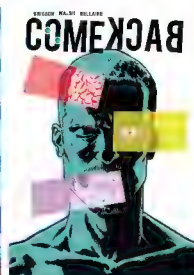
☐ Artifacts #23



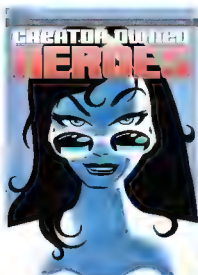
☐ Change #1 (of 4)



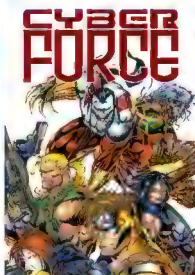
☐ Clone #2



☐ Comeback #2 (of 5)



☐ Creator Owned Heroes #7



☐ Cyber Force #2



☐ Darkness #109



☐ Elephantmen #45



☐ Glory #31



☐ Great Pacific #2



☐ Guarding the Globe #4



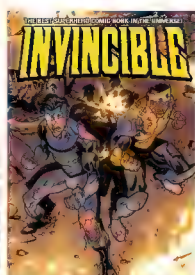
☐ Hack Slash #21



☐ Happy #3 (of 4)



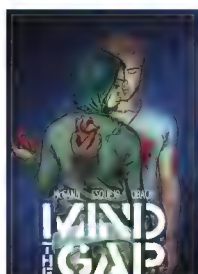
☐ I Love Trouble #1



☐ Invincible #98



☐ Manhattan Projects #8



☐ Mind The Gap #7



☐ Morning Glories #24



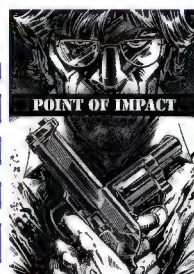
☐ Multiple Warheads: Alphabet to Infinity #3 (of 4)



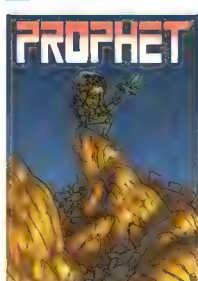
☐ Non-Humans #2 (of 4)



☐ Nowhere Men #2



☐ Point of Impact #3 (of 4)



☐ Prophet #32



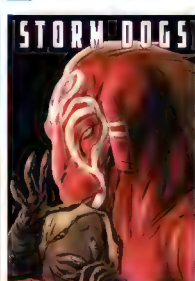
☐ Saga #8



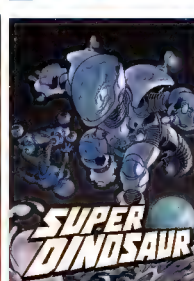
☐ Savage Dragon #184



☐ Spawn #226



☐ Storm Dogs #2 (of 6)



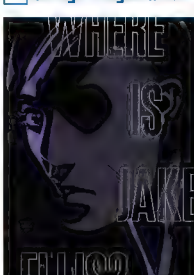
☐ Super Dinosaur #16



☐ Thief of Thieves #11



☐ The Walking Dead #105



☐ Where is Jake Ellis #2 (of 5)



☐ Witch Doctor: Mal Practice #2 (of 6)



☐ Witchblade #162



☐ Youngblood #75

Question of the Month

"WHAT WOULD YOU WANT YOUR SUPERPOWER TO BE AND HOW WOULD YOU USE IT?"

There's a lot of questions about comic book creators, but one that's always interesting is: What would you want your superpower to be and how would you use it?

Justin Jordan
THE STRANGE TALENT OF TONY STARK

Image Comics published Brian Wood's first series, Channel Zero, in 1997 to considerable critical acclaim, and Wood has continued to produce comics and graphic novels at a brisk pace ever since. Focusing almost entirely on creator-owned works, he's become one of the most notable creators of the last decade. He's earned multiple Eisner Award nominations and editions of his work have been published in close to a dozen foreign languages. He is most known for original series such as DMZ, Northlanders, Demo, and Local.

Abhishek Singh
RESETEE: A TONY STARK NOVEL

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Ron Marz
RESETEE

DECEMBER 2012

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10 DEGREE BRIAN WOOD

Image Comics published Brian Wood's first series, Channel Zero, in 1997 to considerable critical acclaim, and Wood has continued to produce comics and graphic novels at a brisk pace ever since. Focusing almost entirely on creator-owned works, he's become one of the most notable creators of the last decade. He's earned multiple Eisner Award nominations and editions of his work have been published in close to a dozen foreign languages. He is most known for original series such as DMZ, Northlanders, Demo, and Local.

Starting in 2012, Wood kicked off the second major phase of his career with the original series *The Massive* and *Ant-Helm*, as well as *Star Wars* and *Conan the Barbarian* for Dark Horse Comics and *The X-Men* for Marvel. His creator-owned collaboration with artist Ming Doyle, *MARA*, will be published by Image Comics in December.

What are you working on right now?
I'm getting notes from an issue of *X-Men* from my editor, and planning on knocking out a *Star Wars* script by the end of the week. I'm actually heading to a *Star Wars* convention this weekend, and then by Monday I have an Ultimate *X-Men* due. (And since this interview took me a couple days, separated by a week, to complete, here's bonus answer: today it's an issue of *The Massive*.)

What's the best part of your job?
The best part is always the fact I can work at home, in my own space, in a (mostly) quiet house and still feel connected to my family. I stopped having to commute and sit in an office ten years ago and I'm still grateful on a daily basis. Any time that I have a stress dream, it's always about that: going back to a day job in a cubicle.

What's the worst part of your job?
Deadlines. There's a lot of perks to being a comics writer, but one of the biggest responsibilities, if not the biggest, is that everyone else is counting on me to deliver work so they can eat. The writer's at the top of that assembly line and nothing moves if I screw up.

How did you first discover comics?
I was in art school, majoring in illustration, and someone told me that these editorial illustrators I knew and liked - Dave McKean, Kent Williams, Bill Sienkiewicz - also made comic books. So I got a late start, but I came into it the right way: seeking out creators and their creator-owned work.

If you weren't working in comics, what would you be doing?
I'd still be working in design, I'm sure. I had a career doing graphic design for the videogame industry before I quit to go write comics. I'm sure I'd be sitting in a cubicle somewhere hating my life.

What's the best thing a fan has ever said to you?
I'm sure I'm forgetting some awesome story, but something I hear a lot is that one of my books was the gateway drug for someone's friend or girlfriend or boyfriend, or that one of my books was what got someone back into comics after a long time away. That's really the best compliment, that one of my books made someone love comics. Hard to top that.

I did, however, just find out that I met Jordie Bellaire, colorist on *MARA*, at some show when she was THIRTEEN and sold her a copy of one of my books. I've never felt older.

Who is the biggest influence on your work?
I don't know. Haha! I don't know how to answer that. It's not any one thing, or one person. My work is sort of all over the place in terms of tone and subject matter and I think my inspiration is probably just as varied.

What is the single work of which you're most proud?

Local and Northlanders. I can't pick just one. Right now, it's those two books.

Own up to one of your guilty pleasures.
Wheeling and dealing on eBay, mostly vintage guitars and related equipment. That's not really a thing to be guilty about, but the volume and frequency I have going on probably is. Its best if no one knows the details.

What was the last comic book you bought?
Probably Peter Bagge's *RESET* from Dark Horse. I have an open subscription to the Dark Horse Digital store so everything there is available to me for free, but I still bought *RESET*. Peter Bagge is a creator I unconditionally love; his *HATE* was the first series I bought and read, and he's earned a lifetime of loyalty from me.

If you could be someone else for a day, who would it be?
I don't even want to be someone else, but I do wish I had other people's talents.

Pick three things you couldn't live without.
The Pogues, Wilco, the Jesus and Mary Chain.

What's the strangest thing you have in your house?
I'm way too boring to have oddities and curiosities in the house, to be honest. Well, I do have a set of taxidermy coathooks made out of deer legs, which my wife finds horrifying, but that's the sort of thing I grew up with so I actually think its comforting.

What makes you laugh?
Most things make me laugh at some level, which is a good thing. I think its how I keep sane.

What is one of your favorite places?
I grew up in Vermont, and each time I visit I fall more and more back in love with the place.

What music are you listening to these days?
I grew up listening to exclusively folk, both American and Celtic, and until I was allowed to buy my own music, which was probably age 14, that's what I listened to. That, and the Beatles, thanks to my older sister. In recent years I've been rediscovering all that folk and finding a lot of comfort in it and I feel pretty blessed to have had that exposure early on and for so many years. Not to sound like a snob, but I'm happy to have been raised with that level of music than the sort of stuff my own kids seem to be attracted to, which isn't all that bad but its pretty shallow in comparison to someone like Pete Seeger.

Who is your best friend?
My wife, of course.

What is the best advice you've ever received?
As it pertains to the business of comics, there is one bit that rises above all else: no one cares about your book more than you do. That sounds sort of bland and general, but especially when dealing with original creations, you need to be very careful with what you own.

When was the last time you were truly frightened?
I have a really bad habit of daydreaming these horrible worst case scenarios and playing them out in my head. I think I must do this as some sort of subconscious-level catharsis, but when I carry my little kid down the stairs, sometimes I think about tripping and falling, sustaining injuries, the ER, and so on. It gets grim and often really freaks me out. Why do I do that?

What would you like to see happen in comics in the next 12 months?
A big increase in digital readership in sales and the direct market remaining unaffected. Then we can all relax a little bit, realize there is nothing to worry about, and get on with it.

the word

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BUTCHER BAKER

THE RIGHTEOUS MAKER

HARDCOVER

Joe Casey • Mike Huddleston

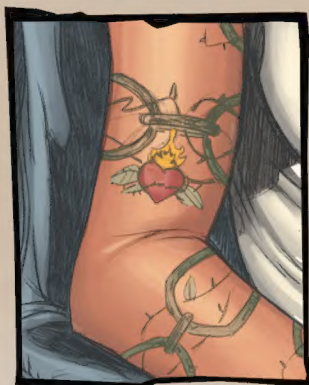
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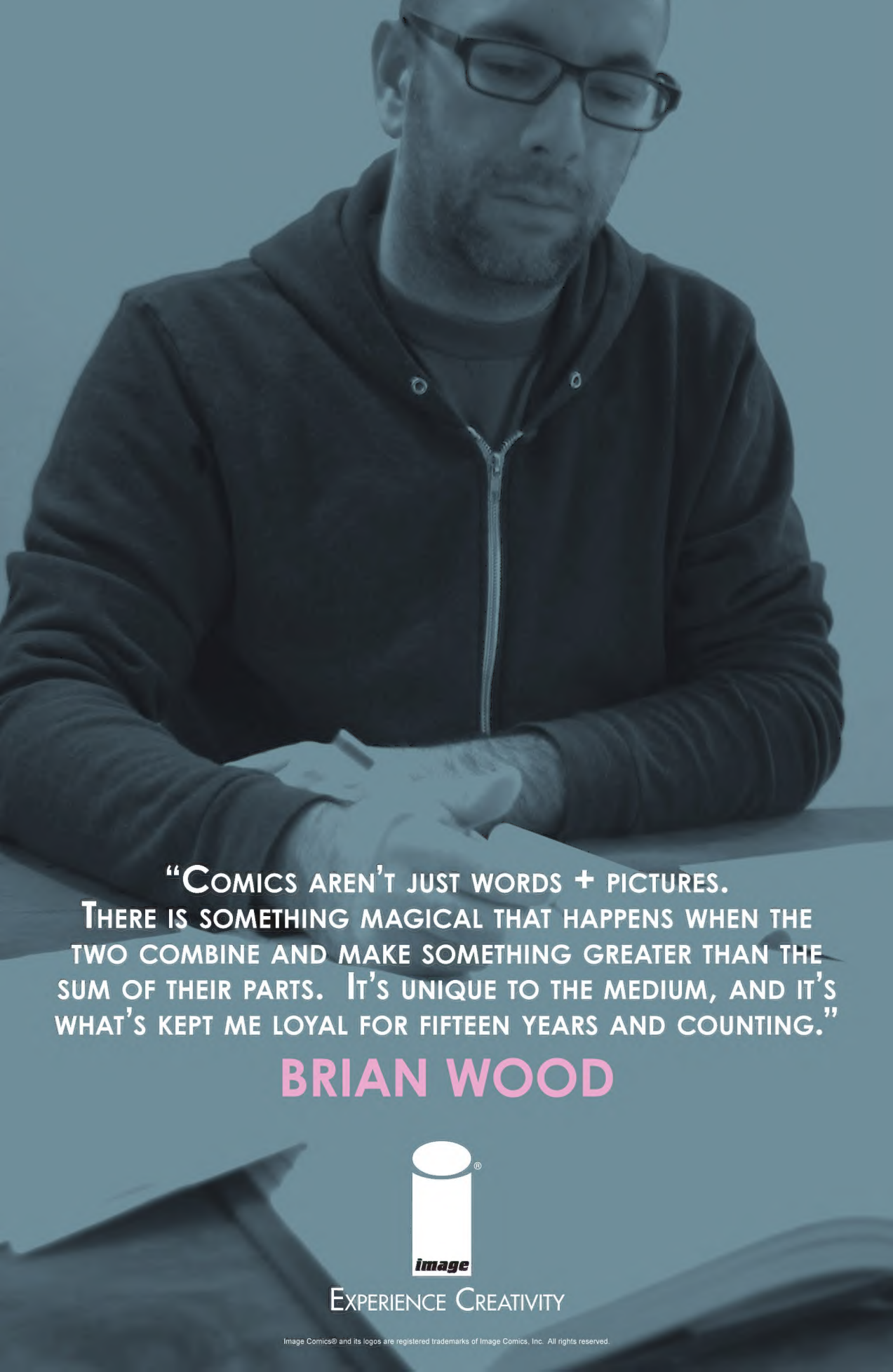
BRIAN WOOD
MING DOYLE
JORDIE BELLAIRE

MARA™



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